

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed on January 26, 2004. With this response Claims 1 and 3 are amended and all pending claims 1-7 are presented for reconsideration and favorable action.

In the Office Action, the Examiner noted an error with respect to claim 3. The language in claim 3 has been amended and it is believed that the objection may be withdrawn.

Claims 1-7 were rejected upon the basis of Kawai et al. as either being anticipated or rendered obvious by the reference. Further, claims 1 and 2 were rejected as being anticipated by Ishijima et al. It is believed that the claims are patentably distinct from the references.

Independent claim 1 states that the bead is held in contact with the discharging valve when the valve is in an open and a closed position. This is illustrated, for example, in Figure 5 of the present application. This is in contrast to the configuration of Kawai et al. in which the "bead" 21e shown in the figures only contacts the discharge valve when the valve is in an open position. Thus, the "bead" of Kawai et al. serves to limit the opening range of the valve. Further, with regard to Ishijima et al., the element 10 is defined as a "spring." It appears that the spring 10 is configured to adjust the spring force of the valve element in Ishijima. It appears that element 11 in Ishijima is the keeper. Thus, Ishijima et al. does not show a keeper with a bead as set forth in the claimed configuration.

As discussed with regard to the background section, such configurations as Kawai and Ishijima suffer from a number of disadvantages. These disadvantages are overcome by the claimed configuration.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that the present application is in condition for

allowance. Consideration and favorable action is respectfully requested.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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